

Eastern Region Essay Winner

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With bullying, intolerance, and hateful rhetoric becoming a cultural norm, it seems as though we are backtracking on the strides we have made in unifying our country. Whether it is politics, ethnicity, religion or sexuality, our differences recently appear to do nothing but divide us. While putting our differences aside can be difficult at a time when society seems to amplify them, many, including myself, are making an effort to encourage unity within our communities.

Like all of Dominion's past honorees, I am a strong advocate for social justice and am striving to create fairness for all in my own way. From a young age, I was taught the importance of treating everyone with kindness and fairness. However, as I have grown into a young woman and begun to experience more of life, I realize this is not a universal mindset. I once assumed that discrimination was in the past, but I now notice that discrimination is still very present. For example, as a girl who has always been interested in math and science, I was shocked when a classmate told me that girls are not good at either subject. It disturbed me that, to some, I am seen as less apt to do well in math or science fields because of an aspect about myself that I cannot control.

This ridiculous assumption pushed me to become active in my school's Social Justice Club, which advocates not only for women's rights, but overall fairness and equality within our society. As an active member of two years, I've been able to help organize a campaign for transgender youth, direct a program at our school that celebrated our differences, and recruit members to join our positive movement.

Through the Social Justice Club, I am able to encourage my peers to see people as their equal and nothing less. As I draw closer to ending high school and applying to college, I look forward to furthering my participation in my community and using my voice to promote fairness.

Thanks to strong women such as Beth Anne Brown, an African-American astrophysicist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center and a past Dominion honoree, I am inspired as a fellow African-American woman to continue my interests in science while in college. It is my hope that promoting fairness will help others to see differences not as a barrier, but as a uniting factor.